

*Washington, DC* – U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-NY19) released the following statement on testimony of General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker to a joint House Armed Services and Foreign Affairs Committee hearing on the war in Iraq: “The hearing provided little in the way of new evidence and I believe we still need a firm timetable to wind down our involvement in Iraq.

We already know American troops are very good at their jobs, so it should come as no surprise that as they have moved into neighborhoods, they have improved security. The escalation was designed to provide “breathing room” for Iraqi politicians to negotiate.

However, General Petraeus gave no new evidence that Iraqi forces are prepared to hold the gains American troops have made. And Ambassador Crocker seemed pessimistic that Iraqi politicians could take advantage of whatever small improvements have occurred.

When announcing his escalation, President Bush said we would see results in 6 months. Now, at the 6 month point, his two top officials in Iraq are unable to show any tangible signs of improvement and have asked for 6 more months. The American people don’t want 6 more months of the same quagmire and I don’t believe Congress should provide it.

General Petraeus’s proposal of a troop reduction is merely a token withdrawal that covers only a very small portion of the 160,000 troops in Iraq. This withdrawal is being forced upon him because we don’t have enough troops to replace the ones being rotated out of Iraq. He has offered to reduce troops not because the escalation is working, but because there are no fresh troops to replace them.”

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